

A hand holding a smartphone in front of a colorful, abstract mural. The mural features various shapes, including circles, squares, and triangles, in shades of red, orange, and yellow. The hand is holding the phone horizontally, and the screen displays a grid of small images. The background is a solid blue color.

**ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE
OF PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA:**

people values processes

PROJECT REPORT

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This report

presents findings from a four-year international study "Organisational Culture of Public Service Media: People, Values and Processes" (2015–2019). The project was funded by the National Science Centre of Poland (Narodowe Centrum Nauki, NCN) within its SONATA 8 programme: www.ncn.gov.pl. It was also supported by the University of Warsaw (Poland) and London South Bank University (UK).

Further information is available
on the project website:
www.creativemediaclusters.com

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Project Overview

Between 2015–2019 the internal organisational cultures of ten successful high technology clusters in North America and Europe were analysed to identify strategies potentially useful for the adaptation of public service media (PSM) to what Luciano Floridi terms the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'.

This results in a content production and consumption landscape typified by data-driven services common in high technologies. The question is what people, values and processes will be required for organisations working with high technologies and data flows. Without internal organisational change PSM is unlikely to be able to operate competitively nor reach all potential audiences.

Of the public service media considered in our study only a few are experimenting with their organisational culture and institutional fabric. This is due to resistance to change, isolationism, and an inability to cross national boundaries. The researchers also found evidence of protectionism; a belief that PSM's special place within national cultural and socio-economic frameworks will sustain the entity. The PSM audience is aging and young people expect more nuanced, personal responses from media across a wider range of platforms. Public service media will continue to lose visibility without adaptation to high technology that uses data-driven audience segmentation techniques.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY CLUSTERS

Organisational culture is the people, values and processes constituting the fabric of a business entity. A contributing element is also the socio-cultural and industrial context which changes from city to city and between Europe and North America. Cluster theory provided a framework for the analysis of commonalities and differences between different types of clustering assisting the researchers to identify different forms, from creative and cultural hubs to co-working communities, public-private partnerships (universities working with industry) to large scale media parks supported by whole-city strategies.

10 CITIES: EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Ten contrasting successful city-based high technology clusters were identified across North America and Europe for analysis: Austin (USA), Boston/Cambridge (USA), Brussels (Belgium–Flanders), Copenhagen (Denmark), Detroit (USA), London (UK), Tallinn (Estonia), Toronto (Canada), Vienna (Austria) and Warsaw (Poland). In each city the nearest PSM outlet was also included to analyse the interaction between high technology firms and the public service media.

City	Public Service Media
Austin	Austin's NPR station KUT
Boston/Cambridge	Public Radio Exchange (PRX)
Brussels	Vlaamse Radio-en Televisieomroeporganisatie (VRT)
Copenhagen	Danmarks Radio (DR)
Detroit	Detroit's NPR station WDET and Detroit Public TV
London	The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
Tallinn	Eesti Rahvusringhääling (ERR)
Toronto	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
Vienna	Österreichischer Rundfunk (ORF)
Warsaw	Polskie Radio (PR) and Telewizja Polska (TVP)

The findings have been drawn from 150 semi-structured interviews, 500+ photographs, company reports, city strategies, and news stories. The data was gathered from May 2016 to December 2017 and analysed between March 2018 and March 2019.

Executive Summary

Six highly linked and inter-woven organisational-cultural characteristics were found, and these vary, often significantly, between firms in the high technology clusters and the local public service media.

To be clear, the recommendation is not to 'clone' public service media into a mirror image of a cluster of high technology firms, but to identify competencies and approaches that might be useful to adopt. Many of the characteristics may be useful to PSM, some may not.

AGGREGATION VS. ISOLATION → **01**

High technology clusters aggregate large, medium, and small firms where symbiotic action is beneficial to advance business and innovation. In the ten cities a number of interactions between creative and high technology firms were observed in relation to emerging media; for example, podcasts and social media use data-driven technologies to support the aggregation and distribution of content to audience segments. Public-private partnerships were also evident in each city, largely taking the form of jointly operated incubation and acceleration facilities where universities and commercial firms wish to increase symbiotic knowledge flow. Where small firms are aggregated, for example in co-working spaces, success is often expressed as a rating of density per meter of office space, an indication of the importance placed on clustering.

The public service media in the study were found to be partnering with cultural institutions, but it was not common to partner with high technology firms. Furthermore, the partnerships identified were organised under commissioning structures. There was low evidence of collaborative creative working. This contrasts with firms in high technology clusters who have a high level of partnership working which is at a far deeper level than commissioning work. PSM workers have a low awareness of the need for change, and a residual culture of entitlement which is likely to be amplifying isolationism.

ENTREPRENEURIALISM VS. ISLANDS OF INNOVATION → **02**

Firms in high technology clusters are highly entrepreneurial. This is coupled with a toleration of risk, failure is seen as an intrinsic part of the development process. Focussing on small projects or serial segments

of larger projects with each stage interspersed by testing and iteration reduces risk. Overall this results in giving high technology firms a greater ability to challenge the status quo than the more traditionally-organised public service media. Successful high technology enterprises (particularly the smaller firms) embed entrepreneurialism within the organisational culture. Most firms we interviewed are 'mission-led', working on services for the good of specific groups or wider global goals such as supporting the circular economy, health and wellness, or combating climate change. This is highly compatible with public service media values.

A far lower level of entrepreneurialism was evident in public service media. Isolated active individuals were identified who were working in small research and development departments. These interviewees felt they were working in 'islands of innovation'. Small experiments were often not taken forward due to a lack of an in-house incubation or acceleration programmes. We argue that entrepreneurialism (activity concerned with developing new ventures in the public good) is likely to be of considerable value to PSM. This is different from commercialism and the commodification of audiences, resulting in potential exploitation and monetary gain.

AGILITY VS. RIGIDITY → **03**

High technology firms have more fluid organisational structures relying instead on trust relationships developed through community-building programmes such as training, networking, and events. These firms also orientate towards processes supporting continuous change. Decision-making is swift, increasing the ability to pivot in response to external technological, cultural, and societal changes.

The rigid departmentalised organisational structures of mass production often found in PSM make decision-making much slower than in high technology firms. These processes have been inherited from the military-style organisational frameworks used when radio began in the 1920s. In many PSMs the Director General, as Editor in Chief, presides over a 'referral upwards' process. Content and technology departments are often separated which is different from high technology firms.

ADVANCED VS. EMERGING PRO-SOCIAL WORK SPACES → **04**

There was strong evidence that social science is being used to design work spaces for high technology firms that support knowledge exchange and relationship building. Trust relationships have to be developed before projects begin. These are developed in the cafés, bars, project spaces, communication booths, roof gardens, 'chill-out' spaces and reading/discussion corners provided in the pro-social workspaces commonly found in high technology clusters. The rituals associated with consuming food and drink enable work relationships to consolidate. Notice boards placed centrally in such gathering spaces also act as a tool for the development of partnerships and to promote the organisational culture of each different community.

Several of the public service media in the study have adapted their offices to provide pro-social spaces. However, on deeper analysis this appeared to be a form of 'dressing' as the processes required to support communities of practice and the incubation of projects was not universally evident.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE VS. CONTRACTUAL FRAMEWORKS → **05**

Co-working was the most common form of aggregation in high technology clusters. Co-working offices enable micro and small firms to undertake projects drawing from a wider pool of skills than in more traditional organisational systems. Each co-working space considers the Community Manager to be the most critical employee. It is their responsibility to run the networking evenings, 'bagel breakfasts', 'beers on a Friday' and afterwork parties. Trust relationships are seeded in face-to-face interactions which are weighted towards the beginning of a new project. When production is going well, one interviewee commented, project management and communication can move online. This offers the possibility to manage projects virtually between geographic locations in the cloud or on servers to which all parties have access. If the project hits problems the face-to-face meetings temporarily resume.

Public service media have Commissioning Editors, however there is no equivalent role to a Community Manager. The larger PSMs have Partnership Relationship Managers whose role is largely overseeing the contractual frameworks between the PSM and supplier.

TECHNOLOGY-ORIENTED NEIGHBOURHOODS VS. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS → 06

High technology clusters are almost exclusively found in city regeneration areas. This is due to pro-active stimulation by City Hall resulting from strategies aiming to grow Creative Corridors, Creative Districts and Regeneration Quarters. Historical analysis of successful 'prime models' of clusters such as Silicon Valley and Tech City, London, UK show pre-existing conditions enabled the clusters to form. This has almost always included an active relationship with a university science or technology department. For Silicon Valley it was the post-war proximity of radio enthusiasts in the nearby military base, and communications researchers at the University. For London the fast internet services supplied to the neighbouring financial district encouraged Tech City's technology firms in Shoreditch to aggregate and prosper.

30% of the public service media in this study are operating in close proximity to a high technology cluster. Others, however, are located in corporate headquarters located either outside of the city centre or close to cultural or civic districts in statement buildings. This is indicative of the longstanding strategic orientations of PSM. In Brussels VRT, the Flemish PSM, will relocate to a Media Park to be with other creative industry firms. This follows the BBC's model of sharing a site with a university, commercial media firms, and cultural institutions, in this case at Salford Quays in the north of the UK.

01

PSM Ecologies

If you want to have the cluster effect then ERR [the Estonian public service media] needs to be in the middle of it

**Public service media,
Tallinn 2016**

PSM can play important role as an accelerator of innovation. They have to play the role; it is not they can play it, they must play it



**High technology cluster,
Brussels 2016**

Public service media's monopoly during the pre-internet era and its historical success has resulted in an orientation towards protectionism evidenced by a strong wish to maintain existing structures. PSM prefers to align with cultural institutions (galleries, museums, and performance organisations) as there is a high cultural-industrial match; the organisational frameworks and structures are familiar and understood. In a media landscape that is increasingly characterised by high technology firms their contrasting organisational cultures are not widely understood by legacy media.





Ecology is much more than cluster. We are not talking only about geographical collaborations

High technology cluster, Vienna 2016

There is a low level of collaboration between PSM and high technology clusters, however the BBC and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation will soon collaborate on content for young people via a shared mobile phone app. Such partnerships are encouraging, but a safer option than engaging with an agile and adaptive ecology of technologically-oriented SMEs. PSM have few systems capable of supporting engagement with such fluid aggregations. VRT in Brussels has a high potential for collaboration via its new 'Sandbox' initiative which is inviting small creative firms to collaborate and innovate.

KUT Radio in Austin is housed by the University of Texas (who also pay their electricity bill), however there is low engagement between the two save offering work experience placements to students. KUT also sends out reporters to cover the highly influential international South By South West (SXSW) festival that takes place in Austin annually. SXSW draws together the most innovative high technology firms from across the world to exchange knowledge. The KUT staff interviewed for this study were aware of the isolation but were not able to solve it.

As has been mentioned earlier, VRT and the BBC are embedding their new production facilities within creative parks and media cities, however this takes time to establish. Being in proximity is the first step, the second step is to adapt production and organisational-cultural frameworks to be able to collaborate.

We have to do that thinking outside of broadcast as much as we thought inside of broadcast

Public service media,
Vienna 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PSM organisational structures need to become more porous and the workforce more diverse. It is recommended that a wider range of partnership frameworks is developed to accommodate project working with large, medium and micro firms, also universities and innovative cultural organisations. This is different from simply commissioning content and will need new agile processes, community-building, partnership skills, and new legal and intellectual property agreements.




02

Entrepreneurial PSM

**Sometimes it becomes
very difficult to untangle
the company's mission
from my own dreams
and desires and goals**

**High technology cluster,
Austin 2017**





I think [lack of Eastern European PSM evolution] is a legacy of the Soviet Union. For many people [working at PSM] means career prospects and getting a stable job

**Public service media,
Tallinn 2016**

We found enterprising staff in several public service media who were reduced to small scale guerrilla R&D (Research and Development) due to resistance from managers “waiting to retire”. PSM’s organisational structure separates content into genres (sport, news, regional broadcasting etc.) in contrast to high technology firms that have less separation and more flow between areas. Employees are also rewarded for innovation which is embedded in the organisational culture. Historically PSM innovation has been curtailed due to outdated media regulation and a culture that often relates to the pre-internet era.



In ten years' time, every company will have to focus on social and environmental sustainability

High technology cluster, Detroit 2017

PSM departments are segmented territories and training is periodic rather than on-going. This results in an organisational culture that is not 'living' or adaptive. There is also a low tolerance for failure due to the high level of monitoring of PSM as a publicly funded institution.

Only a few public service media are experimenting with high technologies such as Big Data, VR, and AI. The most advanced PSMs are often those with smaller departments that are able to be more agile. Innovation is also more evident in departments who make content for young audiences.

PSM is therefore addressing what could be an existential crisis. Encouragingly strong evidence of firms engaged in eudaimonic media (media for human flourishing) was found across all the high technology clusters in this study. This indicates partnerships between such firms and PSM are likely to be of high benefit.

We don't put innovation in a box. We say innovation is a value, and we tell everybody you need to be thinking this way

Public service media,
Boston/Cambridge 2016



RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is a need for training within PSM firms to be adapted into a continuous process. Motivations also need to be introduced to reward small entrepreneurial activity wherever it is found. There needs to be a route for the incubation and acceleration of good ideas into small testable outputs, ideally iteratively tested with those for whom the content is being produced.

CEOs and their teams in the high technology firms interviewed were overwhelmingly passionate about 'changing the world', 'changing my community' or working 'to improve humanity'. Although this has become a cliché amongst start-ups, there was a genuine wish to make products, services, and experiences for the greater good, something which is highly compatible with PSM values.



03

Agile PSM

I'm a sustainability bus driver. People who get on the bus know where the bus is going

**High technology cluster,
Detroit 2017**



**You could regard the
[PSM] Director General
as an emperor who
had no direct authority
because there were
local kings or local dukes
actually governing**

**Public service media,
Copenhagen 2017**



The study found PSM have cumbersome decision-making structures, full of (as one interviewee said) "Emperors, Dukes and Kings" accustomed to protecting territorial boundaries. High technology firms, particularly smaller firms, make decisions exceptionally quickly. Fast decision-making is a key finding from the study as is the importance of agility. Layers of decision-makers slow down PSM's ability to adapt to changing market conditions causing high latency and lower levels of autonomy for creative teams result in paternalism.



The whole structure is very silo based for brands. This stops innovation

**Public service media,
Brussels 2016**

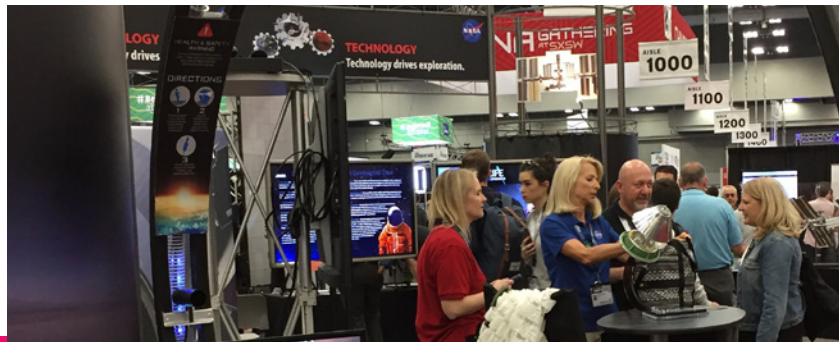
Organisational restructuring, for example the creation of multimedia newsrooms can result in high levels of protectionism rather than a willingness (or ability) to retrain and adapt to meet the needs of evolving media markets.

The project found 'green shoots' of PSM adaptation. For example, the Public Radio Exchange (PRX) in Boston/ Cambridge is an innovative model that is developing high technology solutions for other PSMs in the US public media networks. They have an organisational-cultural fabric that is more like that of firms in high technology clusters. For example, PRX offers employees a high level of freedom and autonomy. Staff can choose where and when to work, provided the needs of each project are met. This is augmented by a 'no sick leave policy' encouraging responsibility and a more mature, proactive approach to wellness as being an intrinsic part of the world of work.



CED stands for Chief Executive Dreamer because I'm a dreamer. I didn't like the word CEO because I find it corporate and boring

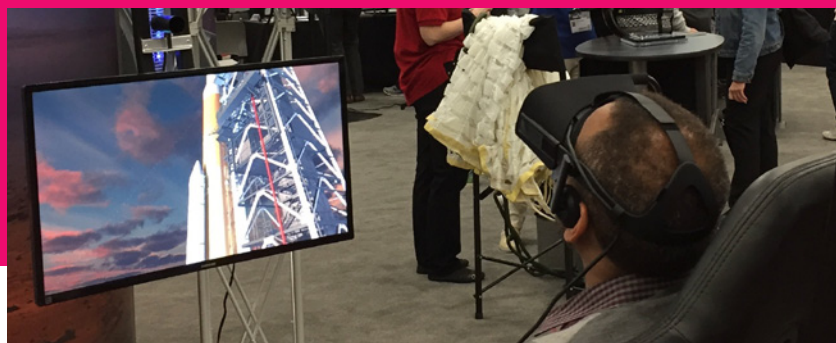
High technology cluster,
London 2017



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Public service media could consider offering greater autonomy to individuals and teams in return for project-based key performance indicators. Instances of particular employees engaging with innovation and change and influencing others were found. Structures that support fluidity across genres, departments, and expertise could be prioritised.

Segmentation of media as radio, television, and online services (from an audience perspective) is of less importance to young audiences.



04

Pro-social Work Space



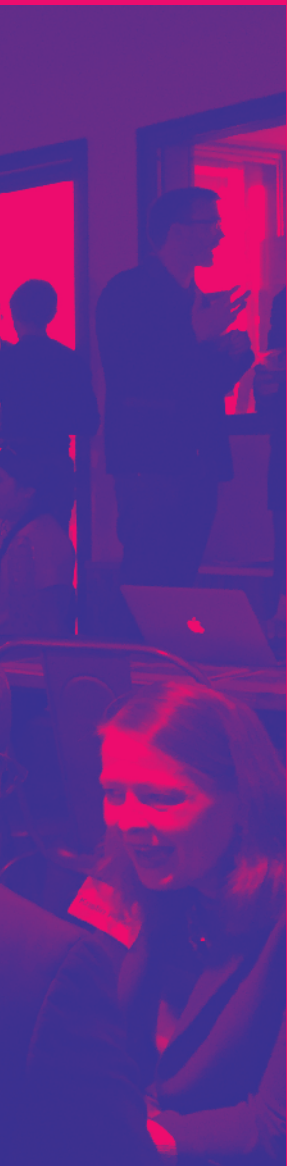
**The architecture of DR [the
Danish public service media]
is beautiful but it is a fortress...
and it's not open**

**High technology cluster,
Copenhagen 2017**

We have to think about how we could arrange meetings in other ways. So, it would be a question of how attractive can the ORF [the Austrian public service media] be as a place to come?

**Public service media,
Vienna 2016**

High technology firms blend face-to-face meetings with virtual working. At the beginning of projects staff spend time establishing trust relationships, firming up project parameters, and working on aligning their culture and ways of working. Co-working spaces draw on social science and architecture/interior design to create pro-social work spaces that increase collaboration and the formation of trust relationships. Having different style spaces for communication (cabins), collaboration (meeting rooms), team and personal development (training rooms) and social spaces (chill-out rooms, cafes) sustains different modes of solo or team-working.





We have a kitchen at the centre of every floor to encourage people to gather in there

**High technology cluster,
Boston/Cambridge 2016**

Tenants at the Cambridge Innovation Center and Toronto's MaRS Innovation District can access a wide range of different types of interaction space including gardens and roof-tops. In Detroit's Green Garage the kitchen was placed centrally as it's the most significant element for the co-working community. Fast decision-making is facilitated by novel techniques, 'stand up' meetings can begin the day; the meeting only takes as long as it needs to accomplish its purpose.

Several public service media we visited are introducing the 'look and feel' of pro-social co-working spaces. CBC in Toronto, ORF in Vienna and VRT in Brussels provide shared space desks with small kitchens, and communication booths. The BBC's buildings have a café on most floors, glass walls to many offices to promote a sense of a community at work, and booths for discussion. In DR City in Copenhagen the corridors of the PSM are designed as a forest promoting a sense of wellbeing along with a gym and café. In contrast, many PSMs in Eastern Europe still exist within old Soviet-style buildings.

The walls are down for a reason, so that people are collaborating and having conversations and helping each other out and sharing resources and sharing knowledge and asking questions

High technology cluster,
Detroit 2017



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Removing walls and introducing transparent walls and doors can create a feeling of connectivity and a removal of barriers. Creatives enjoy having a blend of spaces for quiet contemplation or working at a computer; spaces for play and spaces for celebration.

In the co-working spaces of the high technology clusters access to a library of books on (for example) start-ups, entrepreneurialism and change management were also often offered.



05

PSM Communities of Practice

**The core DNA
of what we do
has community**

**High technology cluster,
Detroit 2017**

The 'You Are The City' philosophy is that everybody plays an active role in the BRUZZ [Brussels] story

High technology cluster,
Brussels 2016

A very strong finding is the importance of building successful Communities of Practice within high technology clusters. Firms in Silicon Valley are opening offices in Austin, Texas and the fabric of relationships between the two locations is often maintained. In Brussels a multimedia platform, BRUZZ, encourages involvement between the local community, high technology firms, and regeneration and development initiatives through the 'You Are The City' campaign.



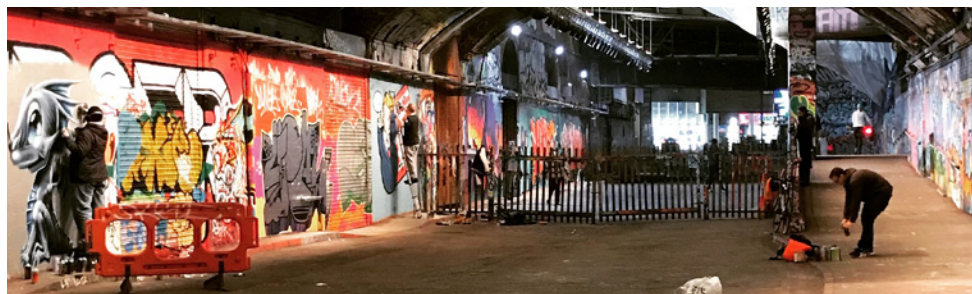


90% of my time here is spent on creating the community

**High technology cluster,
Tallinn 2016**

The public service media in Vienna and Brussels have employees whose role is to foster collaboration with other external creatives. Other PSMs have Partner Relationship Managers, but often this role is limited to the managing of commissioning rounds or contractual issues. In contrast, the Community Manager is the most significant employee in the management structure of a typical co-working space within a high technology cluster.

Overall, the level of collaboration and communication between the producers, technologists and users of services is far higher within high technology firms than PSMs.



Media companies today have to [pay attention to] the people you are working for, you have to listen to them, you have to make things with them, you have to collaborate with them

High technology cluster,
Brussels 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Overall, the value of creating communities of practice around public service media activity is likely to be high. The potential benefit ranges from extending the skills base around projects, to increasing levels of trust, supporting cultural transfer, and increasing the 'glue' between the PSM and all stakeholders (producers, audiences, collaborators).

As the need to draw together content producers with technologists and data architects/scientists increases, being in proximity to centres of such knowledge rises in importance.



06

PSM in the Neighbourhood

**The biggest challenge
that every media
company has is to
stop seeing itself as
a media company**

**Public service media,
Brussels 2016**





We have to have a positive impact on our community and the social environment in our cities and countries

High technology cluster,
London 2017

The findings strongly indicate public service media need to increase their engagement with the local community. Warsaw's high technology cluster is located in Praga, a post-industrial area that has become synonymous with regeneration and creative and technical exploration. The Polish PSM, however, is in the city's administrative sector not the creative centre of Warsaw. In London the BBC has relocated from its West London studios to the Oxford Street fashion and shopping district as it's easier for talent to travel there. The Corporation has established its northern centre at MediaCity, Salford which aggregates commercial media, higher education, the wider creative industries and museums and galleries. In Copenhagen DR, the Danish PSM, is located in the south of the city, supporting the city's regeneration strategy.



You have to be in place so that people can trust you

**High technology cluster,
Warsaw 2017**

DR, the Danish PSM, believes their centre (DR City) offers an opportunity to demonstrate greater openness to the community and also to develop creative relationships with external suppliers and high technology specialists. In Brussels there is an on-going and large scale initiative to develop the Brussels Media Park. This will include a media hub to house the various public service media firms alongside a Creative Corridor that will connect the Park with adjacent creative industry clusters and university research departments.

The dominance of any one firm is critical within a cluster, too much presence within a shared space ecology can disrupt the autonomy required for a community of practice to flourish. Conversely too little engagement from a significant creative entity can result in a decline in the level of connectivity and purpose. In Vienna plans to re-locate the Austrian PSM, ORF, to a high technology cluster in the Media Quarter Marx was unsuccessful due to political reasons.

This is not only a decision based on architecture and economic beliefs. This is of high symbolic value. Because the ORF [the Austrian public service media] clearly states, we are apart, we're different

**High technology cluster,
Vienna 2016**



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Across all ten clusters it became clear there is an opportunity for public service media to play a critical role in the regeneration of specific neighbourhoods that are either already existing or being developed. Having the PSM play an active part in city urban regeneration processes is of obvious benefit. For the PSM greater proximity to a wider skilled workforce is likely to result in diversity of the workforce, increased partnership working, and closer connection with communities, hence increased cultural understanding of changing publics. In addition, another benefit will be greater understanding of the organisational culture and the people, values and processes of other industries. Successful clusters across the study were adept in creating links between high technology firms, university research departments, and a wide range of cultural hubs such as performance venues, galleries, libraries and archives.





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